

PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

Six key principles of development characterise the pattern and process of growth and development in childhood.

These principles describe typical development as a predictable and orderly process.

This means we can predict how most children will develop and the approximate rate and timing of development.

It is important to remember that there are individual differences among children

1. DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES CHANGE.

- *Development is linked to change, so if an individual is not changing they are not developing.*
- *Changes occur in physical development; body size, proportions and functions; social, emotional and intellectual development including all of the things that we learn.*
- *Change during childhood when linked to development is usually positive or progressive and permanent.*
- *Manny changes to our development are determined by our genetics at conception.*
- *Genetic potential refers to the maximum potential we can achieve in relation to growth and development. An individual's ability to achieve their maximum potential (change) may also be influenced by the environment.*

2. EARLY DEVELOPMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR LATER DEVELOPMENT.

- *As a child develops, they add to the skills that they have already gained and the new skills become the basis for further mastery of skills.*
- *An infant will lift and turn its head before it can roll over.*
- *Development in the early years of life is very important and forms the building blocks for further development as the individual progresses through the lifespan.*
- *In order to be able to climb stairs, a child's skills will increase from walking while holding on to something, to walking alone and then by the age of 4 most children will have the ability to walk up and down stairs with alternating feet.*

3. THE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT IS ORDERLY AND PREDICTABLE

- *This is called the cephalocaudle principle. This principle describes the direction of growth and development. According to this principle, the child gains control of the head first, then the arms, and then the legs. Infants develop control of the head and face movements within the first two months after birth. In the next few months, they are able to lift themselves up by using their arms. By 6 to 12 months of age, infants start to gain leg control and may be able to crawl, stand, or walk. Coordination of arms always precedes coordination of legs*

4. DEVELOPMENT INVOLVES MATURATION AND LEARNING

- *Maturation- describes the process whereby a person gradually realises their genetic potential*
- *Learning- influences by the experiences that we are exposed to and refers to the acquisition of behaviours and skills through the interaction with the environment.*
- *By 18 months of age the brain has developed enough that with the help of others a child will have capacity to say and understand words.*

5. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ARE CONTINUOUS...

- *Individual's continue to change throughout the lifespan, therefore development continues.*
- *Development starts from a moment where an individual is conceived and continues till they die.*

6. RATES OF DEVELOPMENT ARE UNIQUE

- *Each child is different and the rate at which individual children grow and develop is also different.*
- *The patterns and sequences for growth and development are orderly and predictable, although each individual child will develop and achieve milestones at different times throughout infancy.*
- *It is important not to rely too heavily on an understanding of development aligned only to specific milestones being reached at specific ages.*
- *There is no such thing as a normal or average child which is why an age range for developmental tasks to take place within is usually given.*